Earth-Germ Contamination Feared Now

Soviet Craft Crash-Lands on Venus; Another Passed Planet on Sunday

3/2/66

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A Russian spacecraft yesterday plowed silently through the cloud-shrouded atmosphere of Venus, apparently crashing into that planet's still-mysterious surface at 1:56 a.m. (EST).

Venus 3, as it is dubbed, thus became the first space probe to "land" on another planet, a fact that promptly brought concern and charges that the Russians may have irreversibly contaminated the planet and thus upset any attempts to discover life on Venus.

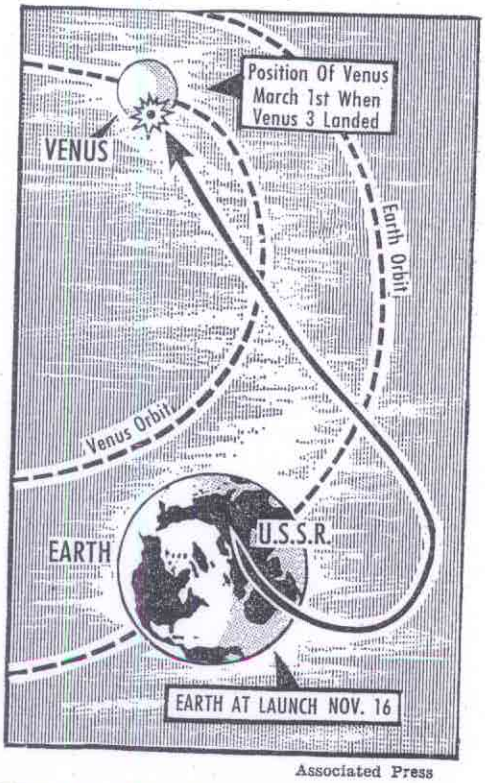
Meanwhile, the Russians yesterday lifted a corner of the secrecy that shrouds their space activities, almost as clouds obscure Venus, to reveal that a second Russian spacecraft flew past Venus on Sunday.

This second probe—Venus 2—came within 14,912 miles of the planet's surface, according to the Russians, and now is on its way to an orbit around the sun.

This would be roughly 7000 miles closer than America's Mariner II, which flew past Venus on Dec. 14, 1962, and returned the still-contentious information that the Venusian surface temperature is 800 degrees Fahrenheit.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration plans to attempt another launch toward Venus with a Mariner-like space-

See VENUS, A5, Col. 2



Associated Press

DIRECT HIT—Drawing depicts flight of Russia's Venus 3 from launching Nov. 16 until it impacted yesterday.